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### **IRAN – DOCUMENTATIE MASSAVERNIEGINGSWAPENS**

BBC News

#### **Russia delays Iran nuclear plant**

13 October 2003

Russia says it has delayed plans to start up a nuclear reactor in Iran by a year but has stressed it is for technical reasons, not because of external political pressure. The construction of the controversial \$800m Bushehr plant will now start in 2005, according to the Russian Atomic Energy Ministry. Russia has come under strong pressure from the United States and Israel to drop the project, as Washington accuses Tehran of secretly developing an illegal weapons programme.

But Nikolai Shingaryev, a senior spokesman for the atomic energy ministry, told French news agency AFP that Russian specialists were continuing to draw up a detailed plan for the plant and the start-up was set for 2005. "The reasons are purely technical, not political," he said. "There is a huge amount of equipment that is needed. Equipment (that we thought) would work is not going to work."

Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Alexander Yakovenko told the Russian Itar-Tass news agency that Moscow would "continue co-operation with Iran because it does not run counter the principles of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)." Last month the UN nuclear watchdog called on Iran to "suspend all further uranium enrichment-related activities" and to "co-operate fully with the agency to ensure verification of compliance with Iran's safeguards agreement."

News of the delay to the Bushehr plant came after Iran indicated on Monday that it would increase its co-operation with the IAEA in the run-up to the deadline set for Tehran to clarify questions about its nuclear programme. Iran has continually refused to suspend its nuclear activities, which it says are aimed at developing nuclear energy and not a weapons programme, as suggested by the United States.

Russia has offered to provide Iran with uranium fuel for the plant for 10 years, if it accepts safeguards and returns the spent fuel. But talks between the two countries have stalled over the details of supplying and returning the spent fuel stalled.

Last month US President George W Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin, after a Camp David summit, said they shared a common goal of making sure "that Iran doesn't have any nuclear weapon or a nuclear weapons programme".

Financial Times

#### **Iran struggles over nuclear strategy as deadline looms**

By Roula Khalaf – 16 October 2003

When the UN nuclear watchdog last month gave Iran until the end of October to address concerns about its controversial nuclear programme, the clerical regime in Tehran reacted with outrage. Iran's delegation to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) walked out of the meeting of the body's governing board in Vienna. Hardline clerics back home loudly suggested that Tehran should ignore the agency and consider turning its back altogether on the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Since then Iran has struggled for a coherent strategy. Differences between reformists advocating compliance and hardliners calling for defiance have surfaced, sending out conflicting messages. United Nations inspectors dispatched to Tehran to gather new information have met with the same uneven attitude that has characterised the IAEA's dealings with Iran over the past year.

With two weeks left before the deadline expires, a frustrated Mohamed ElBaradei, the chief UN nuclear inspector, will today hold talks in Tehran to press for credible answers to his agency's many suspicions and ask that promises of full co-operation be translated into deeds.

A negative report from his agency to the board next month is likely to mean the issue being referred to the UN Security Council. In this case the Bush administration is expected to ask the Council to issue a statement in the hope of raising the diplomatic heat on Iran - but not to call for sanctions at this point.

US officials say such a politicisation of Iran's nuclear controversy would make it easier to convince Russia to end its nuclear co-operation with Tehran. The European Union has also tied progress on the nuclear issue to the pursuit of a trade agreement with Iran.

"If I don't get all the information I need I will be forced to report that I cannot verify the programme," Mr ElBaradei said last week. "Co-operating with the agency will open lots of doors for Iran. Not resolving outstanding issues will definitely lead to confrontation."

The most immediate test facing Iran is to support its claim that traces of weapons grade material found in samples taken at two sites come from imported material that has been contaminated. The IAEA is looking for documents or statements through interviews that would allow it to check the origin of the equipment.

Equally important, according to Mr ElBaradei, is that inspectors have concluded that Iran could not have made the progress it has on its centrifuge programme without testing it with nuclear material - something Tehran denies. "So far they say we haven't tested. I hope through discussions Iran will come forward with a convincing explanation," he said.

But in deciding how to handle the technical questions, Iran faces a strategic decision over the future of its nuclear programme. Tehran insists that its sophisticated facilities are designed to generate nuclear energy. But its determination to pursue a complete fuel cycle - from mining uranium to processing and enriching it - would give it the capacity to develop weapons.

Gary Samore, non-proliferation expert at London's International Institute for Strategic Studies, said Iran was in a bind. "If they co-operate it will confirm what everybody suspects and if they don't the IAEA board will declare them in non-compliance with the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty," he said.

The problem for Tehran is that international demands go beyond the specific questions of IAEA inspectors. The US and other western governments appear to be looking for a suspension of Iran's uranium enrichment activities, which are allowed under the NPT if disclosed to the nuclear agency.

The agency's governing board has called on Iran to agree to intrusive inspections of suspected nuclear sites by signing the so-called additional protocol to the treaty. This agreement would give inspectors greater access and provide a higher level of scrutiny. But its legal requirements do not prevent Iran from continuing with its uranium enrichment.

European governments have raised the prospect of a deal in which Iran would give up the full fuel cycle and in return receive assistance and nuclear fuel for energy production. But the offer has met a cool reception in Tehran. "The view of suppliers is that they are ready to provide Iran with nuclear power and fuel but many of them don't want Iran to continue with enrichment activities," said Mr ElBaradei. "That's the package, to my understanding, but it's something that Iran and its partners need to negotiate."

Diplomats say that if Iran is pursuing a nuclear weapons programme then security guarantees for the regime are more important than technology transfer. Although Tehran emphatically denies any interest in nuclear weapons, many Iranians say a nuclear deterrent is a legitimate pursuit given the proliferation of other countries not far from Iran's border, including Israel.

With the US, which has now replaced Iraq as Iran's next door neighbour, encouraging popular protests against the regime, Iran's clerics feel all the more insecure. Many analysts say that addressing Iran's suspected nuclear ambitions will have to include discussions on security that also involve the US - something the Bush administration is not willing to contemplate yet.

Space Daily

### **Russia's Putin says confident Iran has no nuclear arms plans**

17 October 2003

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Friday he was confident that Iran had no ambitions to develop nuclear weapons and urged the Islamic state to agree to tougher UN inspections of its suspect facilities.

Putin told the Al-Jazeera network in comments reported here by the Interfax news agency that he recently "held long discussions on a wide range of issues, including the nuclear problem" with Iranian President Mohammad Khatami. "We believe that Iran is not seeking nuclear arms. The Iranian president has repeatedly told me about this."

Russia has come under pressure from the United States and Israel to halt the construction of Iran's first nuclear power plant in Bushehr because they fear the project may be helping Tehran develop nuclear weapons. Iran meanwhile is being pressed by the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), to sign an additional protocol to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) that would open the way for unannounced inspections of suspect facilities. The agency has given Iran until October 31 to answer questions on its nuclear program.

Putin said he believed that Iran's nuclear program was peaceful and said he saw no reason why Tehran should be resisting compliance with the IAEA's demands. "If it is true (that Iran has no nuclear ambitions) we see no obstacles to Iran signing an addition protocol" with the IAEA, Putin said. "We see no obstacles to making all of the country's nuclear programs public," he said.

The Bushehr deal is worth some 800 billion dollars to Russia but its launch has been delayed by Moscow until 2005 at the earliest.

## Las Vegas Sun

### **Iran, IAEA Negotiate Nuclear Inspections**

By Ali Akbar Dareini – 18 October 2003

Under pressure to meet a U.N. deadline, Iran began detailed negotiations Saturday on allowing U.N. inspectors unfettered access to its nuclear facilities.

The talks with the U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency "may take several days, (but) I'm optimistic that (we) will reach an agreement," Iran's representative to the IAEA, Ali Akbar Salehi, told The Associated Press.

The IAEA has set a deadline of Oct. 31 for Iran to prove it has no secret program for producing nuclear weapons. If the agency finds that Iran has failed to respond satisfactorily, it is expected to refer the matter to the U.N. Security Council, which could lead to the imposition of sanctions.

The United States strongly suspects Iran has a secret nuclear weapons program. Iran insists its nuclear facilities are only for generating electricity.

The talks came after IAEA head Mohammed ElBaradei met Iranian officials on Thursday to press Tehran on the deadline, saying the agency still has "outstanding issues" to resolve over Iran's nuclear program.

ElBaradei said after his meetings that Iran promised greater access for IAEA inspectors. He said inspectors were allowed to visit one military site and that there could be expanded reviews of both military and civilian facilities in the future.

The IAEA has urged Iran for months to sign the additional protocol to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty that would give IAEA inspectors access to any site they deem fit without notice.

Under Iran's existing agreement to the NPT, the country is not required to allow IAEA inspectors to visit non-nuclear sites, including military installations.

In Washington this week, a U.S. State Department spokesman said America wants Iran to comply with the IAEA's resolution setting the Oct. 31 deadline "in its entirety."

The head of the Iranian parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy committee, Mohsen Mirdamadi, told the AP on Thursday that "Iran's case should not go before the Security Council."

"If allowing inspections of military sites resolves this problem," Mirdamadi said, "then we should do it."

Iranian hard-liners, however, have urged the government to stand firm against world pressure over the nuclear program and even to withdraw from the nonproliferation treaty.

## Xinhua News

### **Britain, France, Germany united over Iran's nuke issue: report**

18 October 2003

British, French and German foreign ministers are planning an unprecedented joint trip to Tehran next week to try to clinch a deal to resolve the row over Iran's controversial nuclear program, the British Telegraph newspaper reported on Saturday.

The joint diplomatic mission will be a sign of a more united European foreign policy after the bitter disputes over the US-led war in Iraq, which Britain joined and was opposed by France and Germany, the paper said.

The three foreign ministers were not traveling on the same plane but their joint visit was designed as the clearest sign that Europeans would not split over Iran's nuclear issue as they were divided in the run-up to the war with Iraq, the paper said.

A British Foreign Office spokesman said on Friday that Britain was discussing with France and Germany how to persuade Iran to address international concerns over its nuclear program, but he declined to confirm that the three European Union powers were planning a joint visit to Tehran.

According to the paper, the European ministers have informally offered Iran guaranteed supplies of nuclear fuel if it gives up the alleged ambition to enrich uranium.

Moreover, they want Tehran to sign up to a new system of inspections by signing an additional protocol to the nuclear nonproliferation treaty, the paper added.

The United States has accused Iran of developing a secret nuclear weapons program in violation of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, a charge that Tehran has strongly denied.

Amid growing western concerns over Iran's nuclear program, Tehran has been given until the end of October to prove that its nuclear program is being developed solely for peaceful purposes, or risk having the issue taken up at the United Nations Security Council.

Reuters

## **Khatami Hints Iran May Stop Uranium Enrichment**

By Parisa Hafezi – 19 October 2003

Iran's President Mohammad Khatami indicated on Sunday Tehran may halt uranium enrichment, which some Western governments say could be used to make atomic bombs, if it is allowed to keep its civilian atomic energy program.

Asked by reporters if Iran was prepared to stop enriching uranium as the United States and several European countries have demanded, Khatami said: "We will do whatever is necessary to solve the problems and in return we're expecting our rights to be preserved which is (the right) to have nuclear technology." It was the first indication from a top Iranian official that Iran could mothball uranium enrichment facilities which it began building in 1985. Iranian officials had previously insisted they had every right to continue enriching uranium to use in nuclear reactors.

Asked if Iran was prepared to meet the demands for tougher inspections and a halt to uranium enrichment, Khatami said: "We will do what is expedient for society and the nation. We have done our best for talks and exchanging views and we hope it will produce a result."

Iranian officials have said the foreign ministers of Britain, France and Germany will visit Tehran this week to discuss a proposal to resolve Iran's nuclear standoff before a looming October 31 U.N. deadline for Tehran to prove it has no atomic arms ambitions.

The three countries wrote to Tehran a few weeks ago offering Iran the prospect of sharing technology if it stops its nuclear fuel enrichment program and accepts tougher inspections of its nuclear sites by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid-Reza Asefi said on Sunday that Iran has invited the three ministers to visit Tehran for talks on the Additional Protocol to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which would allow snap inspections of its nuclear sites.

"Given that the German, French and British foreign ministers had in a letter voiced willingness to cooperate with Iran, we proposed initiating a constructive dialogue with Europe," the official IRNA news agency quoted Asefi as saying. Asefi said the exact date for the ministers' visit had not yet been set but added that "If things go well, the date for the visit of the ministers will be very close."

Last year, President Bush named Iran as a member of the "axis of evil" along with Iraq and North Korea. Bush went to war with Iraq over weapons of mass destruction earlier this year and is in a diplomatic standoff with North Korea over its weapons programs. He made Iran a top post-Iraq priority, urging the international community to make clear "we will not tolerate" construction of a nuclear weapon by Iran.

The European Union agreed that force might be needed if diplomacy failed and joined Washington in demanding Tehran accept tougher inspections by the IAEA.

Khatami said on Friday his country had no plans to build nuclear weapons and predicted that it would reach an agreement on its nuclear program with the U.N. atomic watchdog. Iran and the IAEA began formal talks on tougher inspections on Saturday.

"The IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei has given us the necessary assurances that neither the text of the Additional Protocol nor its implementation will cause any worries for Iran," Asefi said.

U.N. inspectors have found enriched uranium, which can be used to make atomic weapons, at two Iranian facilities this year. Iran blames this on contamination from machinery it bought abroad on the black market.